

SUSTAINING MARKHAM'S BIODIVERSITY

This questionnaire was developed by the Friends of Swan Lake Park ("FOSLP") for Candidates for Markham Council in the October 2026 municipal elections.

Responses will be posted on FOSLP's website and on social media. Please send a scan or photo of your responses by Monday September 14 to friends@friendsofswanlakepark.ca.

Information on Swan Lake Park and responses to FOSLP's community surveys are available at <https://friendsofswanlakepark.ca/resources/>

Name: _____

Candidate for:

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Mayor

Regional Councillor

Ward Councilor (Indicate Ward #)

PART A: STRENGTHENING MARKHAM'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

1) Increasing Markham's Environmental Stewardship Capabilities

YES

NO

DON'T
KNOW

Markham Council has passed a series of important environmental policies but recent evidence suggests there are not adequate staff resources available to effectively implement the policies.

- a) The Urban Forest Plan (2026) estimated Markham's canopy cover at 18.5%, well below the long-term goal of 30% and lower than other cities in York Region.

Do you support staff's recommendations for additional staff to support building and strengthening Markham's Urban Forest?

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- b) In 2026, staff reported they only have the resources to manage 6-7 of the 41 invasive species identified to be of concern in Markham's Invasive Plant Species Management Plan.

Do you support increasing the resources needed to manage the invasive plants in Markham's Greenway System?

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- c) The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) has recommended that Markham Council adopt the policies to make Markham a "Bird Friendly" city.

Will you support efforts to make Markham a "Bird Friendly" City?

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2) Enabling Community Stewardship Programs

- a) The City of Ottawa has an extensive volunteer program that supports community groups that care for community gardens, create pollinator gardens throughout the city or remove invasive plant species from city parks. The City of Toronto has authorized volunteers with the Toronto Nature Stewards (TNS) to remove invasive plants from over 50 Toronto parks.

Do you believe Markham should do more to support community-led stewardship programs in Markham's Parks?

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- b) Markham staff are reviewing FOSLP's request for approval for a 2-year pilot program to remove certain invasive plants from Swan Lake Park.

Will you support FOSLP's request for a pilot program to remove certain invasive plants from Swan Lake Park?

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PART B: MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF MT. JOY DEVELOPMENT ON LOCAL PARKS

Markham Council has approved the redevelopment of the Mount Joy area which will provide homes for up to 25,000 new residents. Developers are promoting the Mt. Joy Community Centre and local parks such as Swan Lake Park as community highlights.

3) Addressing the Impact of the Mount Joy Redevelopment on Local Parks

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|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) <i>Will you support upgrades and new amenities in the Mount Joy Community Centre to support new residents?</i> | ☐ Y | ☐ N | ☐ DK |
| b) <i>Will you support investments in local parks to accommodate the influx of new residents?</i> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) <i>Do you support additional road access into Mt. Joy Community Centre (eg: extending Edward Jeffries Ave.)</i> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

4) Preserving the Biodiversity of Swan Lake Park

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) <i>Are you concerned about the impact the increase in visitor traffic will have on the loss of birds and biodiversity of Swan Lake Park?</i> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) <i>Do you believe Markham should be doing more to preserve the bird and wildlife habitat in Swan Lake Park?</i> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) <i>Will you support conversion of the open lawn areas along Williamson Road to "Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places" if it would help support the biodiversity of the park?</i> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

PART C: RECLASSIFICATION UNDER MARKHAM'S OFFICIAL PLAN

- 5) In 2025, the Markham Subcommittee recommended that staff review the current classification of Swan Lake Park under Markham's Official Plan.

- a) Swan Lake Park is currently classified as "Other Greenway Lands" under the Greenway System. FOSLP believes both Swan Lake Park and Swan Lake satisfy the criteria to be classified as Natural Heritage Lands under the Greenway System.

Natural Heritage status is given to areas that contain natural features and serve as corridors for natural migration. Most of Swan Lake Park is categorized as "Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places", meaning no mowing or spraying and "letting nature do its thing". Recent staff analysis confirms the significance of groundwater on the lake dynamics.

Will you support designating Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park as Natural Heritage areas?

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- b) Under Markham's park system, Swan Lake Park is classified as a "Community Park". Community parks typically include playgrounds, skate parks, basketball or tennis courts. Though it contains a small children's playground area, most of Swan Lake Park is categorized as "Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places", meaning no mowing or spraying and "letting nature do its thing".

Friends of Swan Lake Park have recommended that Swan Lake Park be designated as a "City-wide Special Purpose Park", a designation given to areas that preserve natural heritage features.

Will you support having Swan Lake Park declared a "City-wide Special Purpose Park" under Markham's Official Plan?

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6) Additional Amenities for Swan Lake Park

The following new amenities have been discussed to support the increased visitor traffic in Swan Lake Park.



- a) Building upon the shoreline enhancement recommendations of the TRCA, FOSLP recommended two recreational nodes be added to provide visitors improved access to the lake. (est. \$360,000)

☐ Y ☐ N ☐ DK

Will you support features such as recreational nodes to enhance shoreline access for park visitors?

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- b) The original park plan proposed a dock area near the western shoreline. FOSLP has recommended the installation of an elevated viewing platform on the western shoreline of the lake (estimated cost \$225,000).

Will you support installation of a raised viewing platform on the western shoreline?

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- c) Markham has established Forest Therapy areas for relaxing and reflecting with nature.

Will you support the creation of a "Forest Therapy" area in the raised wooded areas in Swan Lake Park?

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- d) There is limited parking near Swan Lake Park. The original plan for Swan Lake Park included a parking lot on the south-west corner along Williamson Road.

Will you support additional parking within Swan Lake Park?

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- 7) Please share your views on what Markham could be doing to enhance the environmental stewardship of the Greenway System.**

- 8) Please share any additional comments on your priorities for Markham's community facilities and parks.**
